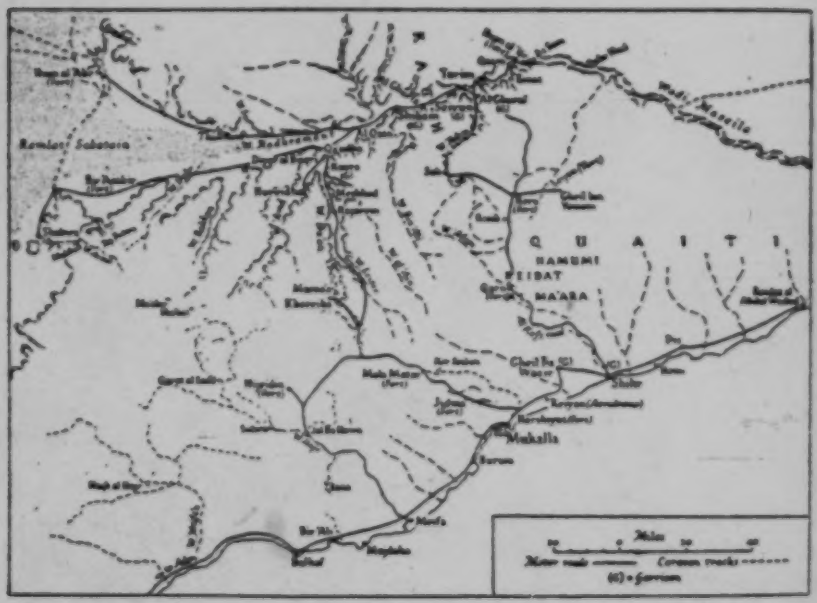
2:Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1945 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

serfs whose economic condition is so oppressive that they have almost fallen to the level of the beasts whose labours they share on their wells. The seiyids dominate the life and thought of the country and, though some of them, those with whom the Westerner comes into contact, have furnished their houses with most of the comforts, many of the luxuries and still more of the barbarities of the West, Western influence ceases at that point and they have been described as "members of the most fanatical sect in Arabia." There are over 20,000 of them in the country and with their families they probably represent about a fifth of the population. The Hadhramaut is also a particular and holy land for it contains the tomb of the prophet Hud and a whole host of minor prophets and saints.



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The country contains the most extraordinary contrasts. Civilization ranges from extremes of luxury and comfort to utter squalor, from considerable culture to complete savagery. The poor town classes usually have enough to eat but no margin, the bedouins live on the verge of starvation. You find the highest standard of morality among the bedouin, but in the towns and especially on the coast vice is all too common: theft, however, is surprisingly rare. Formal religious observance among the settled people is widespread but there are few "good" men. Those there are stand out like beacons. Among the bedouin there is less formal observance (some tribes scarcely pray or fast) but a higher standard of honour

To-day the territory is occupied by the descendants of the ancient people and split into many independent tribes. These tribes are all endogamous and are markedly distinct in appearance. But scientifically it would be difficult to name the distinctions, as they are all of the same race type. There is, however, a sufficiently marked distinction between the two main types to attract the attention of the casual, but interested, visitor to the country. These types are to be distinguished by their own local names, the Yemeni and the Mushreqi, the latter name coming from the ill-defined district of the Mushreq, which applies to the territories east of Yemen proper and does not include the tribes east of the Kathiri of Wadi Hadhramaut.

The Yemeni type are those bearing Sabaean names and Qatabanian names. These remain to be classified from names in inscriptions. It is sufficient to quote such names as Yafa', Qateib and Beni Saba.

Yafa' was the name of an ancient tribal deity, the centre of whose worship seems to have been the ruin of Am'Adia, in what is now the territory of the Audhali confederation, a very recent confederation of tribes. Yafa''s followers had a mausoleum at the holy city of Shabwa. They are now represented by the tribe of Yafa', one of the most eastern of the Yemeni tribes.

Qateib is the diminutive of Qatab, and we may translate it as the "remnant of Qatab." The present Qateibi tribes—"the wolves of Radfan," as they style themselves—form the centre of the war-like Ja'ud confederacy some sixty miles north-east of Aden; Beni Saba, Beni Himyar, etc., need no explanation. The Mushreq type bear un-Yemeni names. The centre of the whole type is the 'Aulaqi confederation. The word "'Aulaqi" is derived from "'alq," the spark of a camp-fire, and has little interest. But the confederation is ruled by the tribe of Ma'an and the "Grand Council of Ma'an" is called to this day when any one of the three chiefs of the confederation is to be elected. Of this type are all tribes east of the Yafa'i border and of the Eastern Yemen plateau.

In colour of skin, a light chocolate-brown, and in hair, both types are very similar, but there the similarity ends. In features, as in dress and in many customs which do not concern my subject, they are distinct from one another.

The tribesman class is the aristocratic, landowning class, and has been so for many centuries. They form 70 per cent. of the total population of the territory. All inter-tribal politics emanate from them. They form the background of the community's life. I have mentioned this class first for several reasons, but principally because we are used to a landowning aristocracy being in a minority. Here they form the majority. Having been for so many years controllers of their own destinies, the one landowning, fighting class and by far the most powerful class in the community, their insistence upon their rights to-day is understandable.

The tribal Chiefs are in three main categories—the appointed Suzerain, the accepted Suzerain and the elected hereditary tribal Chief. It will be simplest to deal with these three types of Chief in turn, giving examples of each.

In the first type, the appointed Suzerains, we can take as examples H.H. the Sultan of Lahej and the Amir of Dhala'.

Hamilton G-5 (no date) 1943 MM 2 Hadhramaut MM 2

tribeswomen and the daughters of Chiefs, and many own land and are given tithes of other land by ancient right.

The other holy class is that of the descendants of the saints, for so they claim to be. Almost every village in the territory has its saints' tomb, a white rectangular building with one or more domes. Some of these tombs are of great age, and many I suspect to be pre-Islamic. Within the shrine these older structures are similar. There is a modern wooden rail pierced by a door. Beyond this is a long plaster sarcophagus in the shape of a roughly surfaced mound, sometimes as much as twenty feet long or more. Within this the saint or the prophet is supposed to be buried. Names, however, give an indication that it is not always an Islamic saint. Such names as Mola Matr, or Master of Rain, are of great interest, and it is a pity that such shrines have been adopted into Islam and not saved for archæology.

Each shrine is maintained by public subscription, in the form of tolls on travellers and gifts to reinforce prayers. Many shrines also own land or receive tithes from land. They are guarded by families who use the title Sheikh and who claim descent from the original saint. The best description for these families is that of "Holy Sheikh." In most cases the saint is considered a miracle worker, and this power may descend upon the Holy Sheikhs as well. This fact in itself is sufficient to give the Holy Sheikhs considerable influence, and they inspire respect and fear. I would stress the question of fear, for it is important. The buried saint and, to a certain degree, his supposed descendants are credited with the power of doing bodily and personal harm, such as depriving of sanity, striking with blindness, destruction of crops and the like. They are, in effect, witch-doctors, and are feared more than are the Seyyids, since they are considered to be dangerous men. Most go unarmed. Occasionally they arm and join in feuds and tribal wars, but such Holy Sheikhs lose much of their power.

In this class one may put the attendants at the shrines of Prophets. They cannot claim to be descended from the Prophets and therefore they are not personally capable of working miracles. Consequently they have little influence in public affairs. The Prophets buried in the Protectorate include Job, or 'Aiyub, as he is called, whose tomb is near Dhala', and Sha'ib, the supposed father-in-law of Moses, who has several tombs. We must also include those peculiar men who watch over the abodes of Jinns and spirits. They are not supposedly capable of working miracles, but they are held in awe for their spooky associations. There is a famous Jinn who resides on the headland of Ras Imran, near Aden. His attendants are all of one family, who are treated by the people similarly to the attendants of a Prophet's tomb.

All those Holy Sheikhs, whether descendants of saints, attendants at Prophets' shrines or Jinns' abodes, are called Sheikhs, and each family elects its own headman. They are frequently confused with Sheikhs who derive their titles from elected headmanship of tribal sections and of villages. While some saints are undoubtedly of Islamic origin, most are, I suspect, of very ancient origin, and all, whether saints, Prophets or Jinns, receive the same honours. A day in the year is set apart for their

5: Hamilton G-5 (no date) 1943 MM2 Hadhramaut MM 21

Ziarra, or visiting day. Early in the morning of that day the attendants unfurl the saint's flag, if he has one, and process with it, followed by the people, to the door of the shrine. Here the people dance and hold a fair, while many go in and put their requests to the saint, firing a salute outside the door and paying a present in money or in kind to the head Sheikh. Once inside, they kneel by the tomb and whisper their requests to it, saluting the tomb with a kiss. They then leave and are entertained with a cup of coffee-husk tea at the door or in the outer court.

Such shrines have another value to the community—they are the only form of poor-relief in the land. Poor travellers will always stop at saints' shrines for the night, and they are never refused entertainment. When travelling in the country oneself it is often a good thing, for this reason, to give a present to the local saint rather than to a petty Chief, and I frequently did so. The political effect is good, and one avoids causing the jealousy among petty Chiefs which is so frequently occasioned by the passage of a political officer.

In the Mushreq there is a class of men who are hereditary and appointed judges. They are probably the remnants of the legal system of one or other of the ancient kingdoms, and, by their situation, I should say of Ma'an. The Chief of these is the hereditary judge or Manqad (plural, Manaqid). The derivation of the word is from the root NQD, meaning "to pick out or investigate." He is elected from a certain family. The family itself has great influence in local public affairs, but only its elected head styles himself a Manqad, and he has the title of Manqad Al Manaqid, or "Judge of Judges." Once elected he himself, without consulting anyone, appoints four or five other Manqads. He does not appoint them from his own family, but from outside, and his choice is not limited to any class or tribe. One, recently appointed, was from the Dha'if class, who are not aristocrats and whom I shall presently describe. These men are known as Manqads and perform the duties of a final court of appeal. Their judgments are given according to the widest possible code, which they describe as "Asharia, Al 'Ada and Al Haq," or "The Holy Law, tribal custom and the Right." Once having put his case to a Manqad, no tribesman would either withdraw it or refuse to abide by the Manqad's decision. To do so would be to forfeit his tribal honour by committing a great shame. Consequently their judgments in disputes are only sought when all other courts have failed.

When a Chief Manqad dies and a new one is elected by the family, the appointments of all other Manqads is suspended until they are confirmed by the new Chief Manqad.

Manqads dress as poor men. They do not carry arms, and behave with great humility. They are treated by the tribesmen and the Chiefs with great respect. There is little doubt as to which part of their code they prefer: it is Al 'Ada, or tribal custom, and they have a fund of ancient folklore which should not be neglected by the anthropologists. They will do everything they can to maintain custom among the tribes, even when to do so is not to their own personal advantage. Recently one of them discovered that a guest of his, whom he had just entertained for a few days in his house, had previously committed a flagrant breach of

5: Hamilton G-5 (no date) 1943 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

But, of course, we do not force things down anybody's throat.

Colonel J. K. Tod: It is forty years ago since I spent some time in Aden. The lecturer said that the Mushraqis were rather darker than the western people. My recollection is that they were fair and aquiline compared with those further west.

You spoke about the shrines of ancient saints being very much revered. At the west of Dhala there was an object of great veneration.

My impression in those days was that the tribes of the Aden Protectorate were extremely democratic and had very little class distinction. The only distinguishing mark was in their dress. The ordinary tribesmen wore indigo-dyed clothes, giving them a very dirty appearance, because the dye always came off all over their bodies, and the better classes wore white with coloured head-dresses. They seem to have commanded the respect of the people, who showed it in a very peculiar way. A tribesman would come up to one of his sheikhs, who might be sitting on a rock, and by way of showing him respect he would catch him by the head and pull it down and kiss him on the head. It seemed to be the ordinary respectful greeting.

You mentioned the eastern confederacy, the Qataban. Is the present tribe the Quteibi? They were one of the confederacy under the Amir of Dhala. My recollection is that that is the only confederacy in the whole Protectorate. It was a very loose confederacy.

Mr. Hamilton: The Yafai people are western. They are not of the western Mushraqi type at all. The Yafais are a very fine lot. There are, I think, two battalions of Yafai soldiers in Hyderabad under the Nizam. They travel all over the world, but they will not let anyone else travel over *their* world. The Amir of Dhala is the chief of the confederation over which he rules, which does not actually include the Quteibis. A political mistake was made originally by trying to put the Quteibis under him. Now, when you put them under Lahej, they say they would rather be under Dhala, and *vice versa*. They have the greatest fun the whole time. Their idea of fun is to shoot and loot each other. When the R.A.F. drop a couple of bombs, usually well wide of their villages, they take the unexploded bomb at once, pick it up, carry it off, put it under a neighbour's house and set fire to it.

Kissing at the top of the head is most respectful, but, of course, there again in South Arabia you kiss the hem of the man's garment one minute and put a knife just where you have kissed the next. But they are extremely respectful, and the chiefs do carry with them the whole honour and self-respect of the tribe.

If in battle one of the chiefs is killed, it is very much regretted, and the whole tribe turns out to bury him. Also the son of a chief and his headmen of villages will indulge in the kiss on the thigh and knee, salutes accorded originally to patriarchs.

Mrs. Gregor...: Is there any connection between the people from Baluchistan Makran and the Mushraqi?

Mr. Hamilton: I do not think there is any connection except that a few travellers come across from the Persian Gulf.

Dr. Hugh Scott (unable to be present) asked Major Hamilton (in writing) whether he considered the confederation of Ma'an to be the

14: van der Meulen T-4 (1931) 1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

cost was paid by him. The way across the mountains is fantastically dangerous, but an expert chauffeur with a first class auto seems to be able to pass over it without any accident. I made up my mind, however, not to risk it again, and on the way back to follow the longer way round through the *wādī*. The mountain road was constructed at a time when it was impossible, owing to hostilities, to pass through the level country.

From the 27th of May until the 7th of June we were in Terīm as the guests of Sayyid Abu Bakr Al Kāf. As a Sayyid he has no official part in the government of his country, but actually he is the man who is now doing most for his country and people. It was he who founded the schools at Makalla, at ash-Shihr, at Dō'an and in the towns of the Wādī Hadramaut, and it is he who supports them; it was he who made possible the transport of the first automobiles from the coast to Terīm, along the great road which he is now engaged in constructing. He is the man who constructed the automobile road from Terīm to Sēwun, and it is he who gives generously to thousands of the poor, to whom he has food supplied every Thursday evening. Terīm is the town for religion and learning; once it was the most important town of Hadramaut, and it is again on the road to become that. It is a town with a multitude of mosques and dozens of palaces, in which are living those families the members of which were able to amass millions of money in Java and at Singapore. The home of Sayyid Abu Bakr is the place where religious and political leaders meet one another, and where the future of the country is discussed.

Thanks to the help of our host, we were able to make a trip to Sūne, the center for archæology, and finally to attain our most distant goal by being able to visit the central sanctuary of Hadramaut, namely, the grave of the prophet of Allah, Hūd, and to explore the mythical abode of the souls of the unbelievers, Bīr Barhūt. The tomb of Hūd (Qabr Hūd) is the Mecca of Hadramaut and of the surrounding countries. For three days in

14: van der Meulen T-4 (1931) 1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

every year pilgrims assemble there from all those regions, and both before and after that a Truce of God prevails during an appointed period, in this country which is rent asunder by mutual warfare. Never before had a Christian been able to get further than Terīm in the direction of this sanctuary, and without the protection and the planning of the powerful Sayyid Abu Bakr Al Kāf we should not have succeeded. On the way to Qabr Hūd we passed the magnificent ruined castles of el-'Urr and Thōbe, and the remains of houses and a cemetery at Makēnun. Qabr Hūd seemed to be a silent and defunct little town, with great houses which are only occupied for three days in a year. In the bed of the *wādī* there appeared to be water here, but before it reaches the sea it is said to disappear underground or else to dry up. The grave of Hūd, the great preacher of repentance in Hadramaut, is adorned with a dome which impresses one by its simplicity and beauty. The other sacred buildings are equally beautiful and are well kept. Where we had expected to find a Bedouin sanctuary which was neglected and primitive and surrounded by mud huts for the pilgrims, we found instead on the border of Arabia's "empty quarter," far away from the world, a sanctuary built and cared for with devotion and great talent.

We entered still further into the branch valley of Barhūt, and at the end of this *wādī* we saw at a height of about one hundred meters above the bottom of the valley the dark yawning chasm of the Bīr Barhūt, of which even the ancient geographers furnished descriptions, and definitely anticipated that there must be here the crater of a great volcano. After an investigation of two hours in the dark passages, arches and tunnels of Bīr Barhūt we were able to determine that we have here to deal with an ordinary limestone cave. Nowhere in this region did we see any trace of volcanic action. It was only in the broken ridge of mountains on the coast that we saw many traces of volcanic action. Further north the strata are horizontal; a layer of limestone about

18:Ingrams G-3 (1934-36)1938 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

and there was a general desire for peace in order to get on with the work in the fields.

My wife was accompanied by Seiyid 'Alawi al 'Attas and Jemila, a devoted maid servant of the family, who perched precariously on the back of my wife's camel singing Badawin war songs. My wife learnt some of them and they proceeded up the wadi singing duets. Besides being an amusing companion Jemila was a very useful one, for she proved an excellent lady's maid and a masseuse as well. Seiyid 'Alawi has married a tribeswoman, so the party stayed at Zeila in the house of his brother-in-law, one of the principal Ja'da chiefs. Like many Ja'dis their host had been to Java, but the only sign of his travels was a bicycle which he had brought back with him and which he said he preferred to a camel. From Zeila they rode through many small villages to 'Anaq belonging to the Al ash Shaibi, who are credited with possessing the Evil Eye and consequently shunned as much as possible. Seiyid 'Alawi thought it prudent not to mount his camel till the village had been left well behind, in case he was made to fall off by some evilly disposed person. They spent a night at 'Amd, which is almost at the end of Ja'da territory, for a little farther up the wadi the Madhi tribe have their habitat. All the villages in the wadi are much alike with a few three- and four-storeyed houses set amongst smaller ones, and most of them have well-built tanks for catching rain-water. Particularly in the left bank there are many dug-out caves, largely used now for habitation and grain stores. Miss Caton-Thompson says that these were probably all Himyaritic tombs. I think some cave dwellers she met were rather put out when she told them they were living in tombs. Many of the Al 'Attas family, who have much influence over the Ja'dis, have been canonized and their domed tombs are objects of veneration in several villages. My wife's appearance was taken for granted at 'Amd, where she spent a night with women who had been to Java and had seen European women before. They had brought back a few momentos of their travels and impelled by the same spirit that makes us hang Eastern curios on our walls they had hung up a pair of cheap European high-heeled slippers for the admiration of their untravelled friends.

From 'Amd they returned down the wadi following the left bank and passed many ruins, most of which covered low spurs jutting out from the cliffs. At Husn Ba Qasm there are ruins known as 'Adiya Qudha'a which may indicate the site of what was once the principal town in the wadi, as in the days before Islam it was called Wadi Qudha'a. Near the large village of Bateh they passed the time of day with a man who spoke to them from a second-storey window of his house as he dared not go out, for he was carrying on single-handed a war with all his neighbours. Like many others with whom my wife talked he asked for peace. Another had said "We want peace, we're sick of fighting. A man works in his fields and is shot dead—what's the use of it?" And another stopped them and said: "A country without a government is not a country. Bring us peace and settled government."

Returning to Shibam, which is of course the principal Qu'aiti town of the interior, there is west of it past Al Qatn and as far as the junction of the Wadi Du'an a bloc of Yafa'is, with a few Kathiris surviving in such places as Ajlain on the junction itself and also in the Wadi 'Amd. These Yafa'is have been

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

he tries to mount it unnoticed. We have seen, however, and call out to him to get off, because we have just dismounted out of pity for the animal. His Yāfiʿ comrade, who is walking in front of me, calls to him *not* to obey. I angrily bid him be silent, with the remark that I have paid for the donkeys and that, consequently, the command over them lies with me. At his insolent reply: "Hold your tongue!", he gets without further ado a box on his ears. He turns in fury, his rifle clenched in his hands.

"Shall I let myself be struck by you?"

"You shall obey me, you are under my command."

ʿAbdallāh sulkily vanishes into the rear-guard, while we all keep our eyes on his rifle. His comrade comes to me before long to ask forgiveness for him. "Do not be angry with him, he is a little mad." Who can be angry for long with these rough children of nature? Towards evening, when the heat is over and thirst and fatigue no longer torment, both Yāfiʿ soldiers get their so much desired remuneration and part with the two *Naṣrānīs* as the best of friends.

Close to Hadjarēn we passed a mosque at a saint's grave, and all sought the cool shadow of this place, forbidden to unbelievers. We were allowed to stand for a breathing-space in the porch. There is an earthenware jar full of water in the building, but we may not go inside, so our Makalla soldiers fetch water for us. A few peasant women who are passing by also come for the sake of the shelter. Their wide, dark-blue, rough, cotton garments leave their faces uncovered. However, as soon as they see strangers, they draw their head-cloths over their faces. They wear straw hats, with pointed crowns and wide brims, as a protection against the sun.

3. AN UNFORGETTABLE RECEPTION IN HADJARĒN.

From here the way mounts towards the foot of the mountain close up against which lies Hadjarēn. A steep, paved, zigzag path leads at last to the gate of this town, which by

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

on a hill. Whilst we photograph, survey and sketch, we feel as if our narrow standing-place were swaying gently to and fro. It is unpleasant to contemplate that we are so high above the level of the ground, standing on a slender tower made of almost nothing but dried mud.

5. SMALL RUINS OUTSIDE TERĪM.

In the evening, during the family motor drive, when the el-Kāfs and their set ride in slow procession through the gardens of Terīm and the baked plains of stone that lie outside it, a hill in the midst of Wādī ʿĒdīd is pointed out to us, which is said to have associations dating from the ʿĀd epoch. From a certain distance an old, paved high road is clearly visible, leading to the summit of the hill, where a temple must have stood. Only loose stones with mortar between them are now to be seen on the hill; at its base there are the remains of foundations of buildings, which seem to point to a guest-house with many small rooms. For the people of Terīm these ruins have an odour of sanctity; a similar hill, close by, is used by childless women as a place of worship, where they have to perform certain nocturnal rites by means of which they hope to have children.

6. A WALK THROUGH THE TOWN.

On the following day, May 28th, we go with the doctor to see his house and clinic. This pioneer of western medical science has no easy time here; the people still cling to their own ideas as to the functions of the human body and the causes of illness. They think that there are three chief causes of sickness, namely *riyāḥ* (gasses in the blood), *burūda* (cold), and *ḥarāra* (heat). They say of foods that they make the body cold or hot, or cause or disperse flatulence. Even the men of standing talk about their ailments in this terminology

CHAPTER XI.

A TOUR TO THE RUINS NEAR SŪNE.

In the evening, in conversation, we lead up to the question of our plans for further travel. They laugh incredulously at first and say that it is now too hot to travel by day: they themselves only go out of doors towards sunset. When we say that we cannot understand how the great leaders of business of Singapore and Java and these men, who played an active part there in education and journalism, can stand this life of inaction, they answer: "This is the land of sleep and of death. We come here to sleep and towards the end of our lives, so that we may die here." The changeless, scorching plains of stone, the rock-walls, the deserts of sand, the ever green date-palms, the glowing heat and the noiseless nature in Ḥaḍramaut do indeed make one think of sleep and of death. But we are still full of the restlessness of the West, and they see that we are serious in our desire to see more of the country, in spite of heat and thirst and in spite of difficulties certainly to be anticipated from the Bedouins, who are also in bad odour here. Our great object is to see Qabr Hūd and Bīr Barhūt, the former, because it is the great sanctuary of Ḥaḍramaut to which each year thousands go on pilgrimage, and the latter, because for centuries past the most fantastic tales have been current about Bīr Barhūt and no one can say with certainty what this "mouth of hell" actually is. Sayyid Abū Bakr has promised to help us. The expedition to Qabr Hūd and Bīr Barhūt demands days of preparation and therefore we had better undertake a simpler excursion first and visit the ruins in Wādī Sūne.

On Friday, May 29th, we leave Terīm early in the morning in two cars. We are in the first with Sayyid Hāshim and the

CHAPTER XII.

THE AIM OF EVERY HADRAMAUT EXPLORER: QABR HŪD AND BĪR BARHŪT.

ooo Very early on May 31st we depart in two cars for the journey to the tomb of Allah's prophet Hūd and for Bīr Barhût. None of the family or their intimates have any desire to join this tiring, hot expedition and only Sayyid ᶜAlī el-ᶜAṭṭās el-Badawī, who made the descent of Bīr Ghumdān near Ḥurēḍa, remains faithful to us. He wishes to be the first Ḥaḍramī to go down into the mysterious depths of Bīr Barhût [1], so that thereafter his name may be immortalized in his country's history.

For companions we have Ṣāliḥ, our cook, and further, Bedouins and soldiers of Sayyid Abū Bakr. We first pass large villages, palm-groves and fields of *dhura*, as we drive through the wādī. One can see from the outward appearance of the villages and gardens that we are going through a district that is on the decline. This becomes very clear as we approach ᶜĒnāt which lies on the right bank of the wādī-bed.

1. THE NUQRA.

361 778 ᶜĒnāt was once one of the largest and most famous towns in Ḥaḍramaut. The great *qubba* of Shēkh Abū Bakr bin Sālim, as well as the tombs of six other holy men, attracted great numbers of pilgrims to it. The approach to the town was made a pleasure by a large wood of palms. The white cupolas and numerous mosques, real gems of the pure Ḥaḍramaut style of architecture, drew the admiring glances of the thousands

[1] Later on (pp. 150 and 165) we shall see that one Ḥaḍramī, the late Sayyid Muḥammad bin ᶜAqīl, penetrated into Bīr Barhūt, twenty years ago, but gave up the endeavour after some hundred yards.

p. 148

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

of pilgrims who used to come and worship here. ʿĒnāt is well situated for this: nearly *all* pilgrims to the tomb of God's Prophet Hūd must pass through it. Now its greatness has fallen, and everyone in Ḥaḍramaut knows the *nuqra*[1], the cause of its gradual ruin. Since the disappearance of the dams periodic strong currents of water have worn out and deepened the *sēl*-bed. This erosion has moved slowly up-stream. By a dam nearly a mile in length Shibām has had to protect its palm plantations against this action, which lays bare the roots of the trees. ʿĒnāt is situated further down-stream than any town in Ḥaḍramaut, so that it gets the full force of the torrents and the erosion occurs here first and makes itself most seriously felt. The *sēl* is very much strengthened at times by water from various side-wādīs, and in the thick layer of loess covering the valley here its bed is washed out deeper and deeper.

The roots of the palm-trees are washed bare and, consequently, the crop becomes smaller. Finally the tree falls; it goes on living and still bears fruit, but its death is near. The broad zone of palms around ʿĒnāt is slowly perishing through the *nuqra*. The palms are doomed; the sun penetrates through the many open spaces, the works for distributing water are destroyed, and everything is covered by a layer of white sand. We only visited ʿĒnāt on the way back, keeping now to the northern bank, which soon rises high up above the bed of the wādī. The loess wall is becoming more and more undermined by the water and it is therefore difficult for our drivers to find a safe way along it. This danger proved real on the way back; one of the two cars overturned and was badly damaged. An attempt has been made to divert the *sēl*-bed to the foot of the mountains on the north by constructing a dam. A great sum was raised for this, but the dam was repeatedly destroyed by the water so that the undertaking was, at last, abandoned. The plan to construct a dam was due to the initiative of one

[1] *Nuqra* is the gradual erosion by the water.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

6. THE TOMB OF THE PROPHET HŪD AND THE SILENT PILGRIMS' TOWN.

778 At last we see the white domes of Qabr Hūd and the buildings belonging to it, against the dark rock-wall. The wādī bends at a right angle towards the north; from the distance it almost looks as if it had no outlet and ends in a steep chasm between black rocks. About half an hour before we reach Qabr Hūd we come upon a square mud building on a flat-topped hill, in which a guard is posted. Our *muqaddam* maintains that we may only enter the town under the protection of this guard. We manage to arrange for our protectors to await the caravan and to go with it to the house in Shaʿb Hūd (the Chasm of Hūd) where we are to spend the night.

778 133 And now we are making our way unaccompanied to the goal which we had hardly dared to hope to reach. It is only thanks to Sayyid Abū Bakr that we, as the first Christian visitors, are allowed to enter this renowned sanctuary of Ḥaḍramaut. To approach it, my companion and I leave the road and go across country, each following what he thinks to be the shortest and best way. Wādī Barhūt here leads into Wādī Ḥaḍramaut. The thick layer of loess is, in many unexpected places, deeply cut into by water flowing away after rain. The banks of these dry *sēl*-beds are so steep that it costs time and effort to get through. The hills between them are covered with a layer of fine dust more than eight inches thick. A great number of bushes of *ʿushar*, *rāk* and *ithl* make the landscape a charming picture of fresh green.

361 778 But our eyes turn towards the wonderful white buildings that lie there before us, up against a grey-black precipice of rock, and towards the dead town lower down in the narrow ravine — the town which is only inhabited for three days in the year. The whole scene is much greater and more beautiful than we had ventured to picture it in our thoughts. The pure white buildings, destined for the cult of the saint, give the impression of being brand-new, and of being most devotedly

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

preserved and cared for. The town with its solidly built, large houses looks well-kept and attractive. We had expected to see a great camp with tumble-down huts and certainly not a town with cupolas and mosques, with tall houses of many storeys with whitewashed roofs and high windows. In earlier times it was indeed different. Qabr Nebī Allāh Hūd has been the headquarters of a religious cult, belonging to and destined for Bedouins, dating from pre-Muḥammadan times. Wealth, amassed abroad, has been partly used to show gratitude to Allāh, the Giver. Thus, a full ten years ago, a rich member of the el-Kāf family left a large sum of money for the restoration of this sanctuary; only the cupola of the tomb is old, the other religious buildings being new. The tomb lies higher than the rest against the steep rock-wall. I will recall here the popular story of the Prophet Hūd, the man of God of pagan times, who called his people to repentance and conversion, yet, like many another prophet, was not honoured in his own country. He ended his earthly career in this place, hunted down by his enemies. Allāh opened the rock for him and his pursuers saw him no more. The faithful she-camel (the *nāqa*) that Hūd rode and the milk of which he drank died close by his master's grave. When Islām had penetrated into Ḥaḍramaut, the cult of the Prophet Hūd arose and the pilgrimage to his tomb was incorporated into that Faith.

Hūd must have been a very big man, for his grave is about 120 feet long. The *qubba* is built on the spot where his head is said to rest, the place where, also, the rock was cleft open. The building is in pure Ḥaḍramī style, simple and lovely. In the narrow ravine encircled by threatening, dark precipices and rude, brownish-black blocks of stone, this gay, white edifice with its beautiful simplicity and its sober ornamentation is like the voice of all that is finest and highest in man in a world of harshness and want. This voice, speaking in the eternal silence of this out-of-the-way, motionless corner of the world, is heard and understood even by us, the first Christian pilgrims from the West. We understand how the

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Bedouin, calling himself a Muslim, yet still a heathen, approaches this spot with holy dread. Here, for three days, he knows peace with his fellows and brotherly intercourse; here fear is banished; here he stands, in very truth, on the threshold of holy ground. He, with his life's great need, approaches the miracle-working tomb of his Prophet like a hopeful and trustful child. He, or more often she, carries a wooden wedge and a coloured thread of wool with a little stone attached to it, lightly in the hand. The wedge has to be driven into the outer wall of the *qubba* or into the rounded border of stone, plastered with white, which marks the place where the body lies. It does not seem to be permitted to drive wedges into the inside of the cupola. The threads of wool are chewed into lumps and, well-moistened with saliva, are stuck on to the walls and ceiling. The walls are decorated in this way so profusely that they look as though hung with a many-coloured wall-paper or enriched with a gaily painted design.

We have approached the sanctuary warily and noiselessly. No one comes to forbid our entrance, so we venture to go in. Fortunately there is no one inside either. Below us, in the *nāqa* mosque, there are a few pilgrims, and if there are keepers of the buildings they will be with them teaching them how to recite the special prayers. The sound of litanies said in unison rises up to us; they are repeated with monotonous persistance and increasing urgency. In the *qubba* of Nebī Hūd we see, in the middle, a round piece of masonry like the base of a very thick pillar. It is built upon the protruding rock, which has a wide, deep fissure in it just here. This is the place where the rock, at Allāh's command, must have opened for His servant to enter and never closed again completely. The rock and, in particular, the edges of the cleft, are polished smooth by the thousands of hands that have stroked them gently in prayer and by the lips that have kissed this sacred spot. Verses from the Koran in which the Prophet Hūd is mentioned, or sayings of Muḥammad handed down by word of mouth, extolling the merits of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Hūd, are written here and there on the walls.

●778
346

The national sanctuary, the tomb of Allāh's Prophet Hūd.

p160 (B)

See page 158.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

346
178

p 160 (D)

The heart's desire of every Ḥaḍramī, the cupola of Nebī Hūd.

See page 160.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

ment. We drink then as much as we can, and that is saying a great deal!

Our Bedouins now begin with the cooking of a meal. It is late before the rations are dealt out and still later by the time they have eaten their fill and have settled down to sleep. The moon has risen over the mountains and illumines the wādī through which we have come. The *sēl*-bed, smooth as a mirror, looks like a silver ribbon, the bushes and trees make a white mist along the banks, the crumbled rock-walls are like primeval, impassive witnesses of the ruin of the people of ᶜĀd, grown rigid by silence and inaction.

7. BĪR BARHŪT, THE ENTRANCE TO THE ABODE OF THE SOULS OF UNBELIEVERS.

We plan to set out next day before day-break for Bīr Barhūt, to have a close view of that volcano of legend and its crater. Two Bedouins are enlisted to show us the way, but only a few others of our company have the courage to go with us. Ṣāliḥ, our cook, who has tramped through the whole rough country of the Yemen as donkey-boy to a Greek merchant, has no fear and casts in his lot with ours; he says that where we go he too will go. Then there is Sayyid ᶜAlī el-ᶜAṭṭās, who is trying to make a name for himself in Ḥaḍramaut, who made the descent into Bīr Ghumdān with Von Wissmann, and who has set out with us this time, in order to add the descent into Bīr Barhūt to his laurels. The leader of our caravan will also come; he has shown himself to be a daring rock-climber and is curious to investigate whatever interests us. Then again there are a few Bedouins who will let this night's dreams decide for them whether or no they are to accompany us. The undertaking is much harder in the eyes of our companions than in our own, for they are firmly convinced that snakes and monstrous creatures live in the black abysses of Bīr Barhūt, and they know and accept credulously the tales that are told of suffocating vapours rising out of it. Never-

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

theless, their trust in the ability of the white Westerner and in the power of his instruments counterbalances these intimidating factors. If we go calmly ahead armed with our automatic pistols and electric torches they can keep enough courage to follow.

Bīr Barhūt is mentioned in several old Arabic works on geography.

El-Hamdānī, who wrote, about A. D. 900, his *Kitāb Ṣifat Djazīrat el-ᶜArab*, mentions Bīr Barhūt among other remarkable wells and quotes the curse: "May Allāh send his soul to join the souls of the unbelievers in Barhūt!" [1]

El-Masᶜūdī, who wrote, about A. D. 950, his *Kitāb Murūdj edh-Dhahab*, says: "The volcano of Wādī Barhūt lies somewhere in the country of Asfār and Ḥaḍramaut, belonging to the land of esh-Shiḥr, which lies between the Yemen and ᶜOmān; its voice, like that of thunder, is to be heard from many miles away. It ejects coals as large as mountains and pieces of black rock, whose sound as they are thrown into the air can be heard afar off, and which fall into and around the crater. The coals which come out of it are stones, red hot from the fire", etc. [2]

El-Qazwīnī writes in his *ᶜAdjā'ib el-Makhlūqāt*, about A. D. 1250: "Bīr Barhūt is close to Ḥaḍramaut. The Prophet — on whom be the *ṣalāt* and the *salām* — has said of this *Bīr*, that the souls of unbelievers and of hypocrites dwell within it. It is a well from the time of ᶜĀd, in the desert part of a dark wādī. It is told of ᶜAlī — to whom God be merciful — that he said: 'The bit of earth most hated by Allāh is Wādī Barhūt, in which there is a well filled with evil-smelling, black water, wherein go the souls of the unbelievers.' El-Aṣmaᶜī says that he was told by a man from Ḥaḍramaut: 'Whenever we notice

[1] El-Hamdānī, *op. cit.*, p. 128, l. 25; 201, l. 2; 203 *infra*. See also for the legend of Bīr Barhūt, J. Halévy, *La légende arabe sur Bourhoût* in *Journal Asiatique*, 8e Série, T. ii., p. 442—454.

[2] *Les Prairies d'Or*, ed. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille, Vol. ii. (Paris, 1863), p. 26—27.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Ḥadhramaut MM2

a foul smell in the neighbourhood of Barhūt, then, later on, we are informed of the death of one of the most prominent among the unbelievers'." [1]

Other writers when speaking of Ḥaḍramaut also mention Bīr Barhūt and record what they have heard of it. That does not differ in essentials from what is said by the old writers. [2]

The first more exact information comes from the aforementioned Ḥaḍramī scholar, the late Sayyid Bin ʿAqīl; he was the first writer to see Bīr Barhūt for himself and even had the courage to enter it for some distance and he gives a detailed account of what he thinks he saw and observed within it. [3] It is true that he speaks still of the trails of snakes, of the smell of sulphur and of the ashes of burnt sulphur, but his description differs widely from the pool of sulphur into which were thrown the souls of unbelievers.

This description of his travels was only published after our return from Ḥaḍramaut. We both, however, had the privilege of meeting the learned Sayyid and of hearing from his own mouth much that was worth knowing. He spent his last years in Ḥodēda in the Yemen, being exiled by the Qeʿēṭī Government. We had met a brother of his at el-Kāf's house in Terīm.

We left Qabr Hūd for Bīr Barhūt at five o'clock on the morning of June 3rd. We went on foot, but had a camel with us laden with water-skins. As baggage we had only cameras, electric torches, compasses and a rope. Wādī Barhūt debouches into the main wādī close to Qabr Hūd. It is fairly wide at first and the surface soil is a thick layer of loam. A remnant of agriculture and a few small date-groves still remain. There is also the well from which, on the previous evening, we had procured drinking-water. No trace is left

[1] El-Qazwīnī, *ʿAdjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1849), Vol. i., p. 198.

[2] Cf. Th. and Mrs. Bent, *op. cit.*, p. 138 *sq.*; C. Landberg, *Etudes sur les dialectes de l'Arabie méridionale*, Vol. i., *Ḥaḍramoût*, Leiden, 1901, p. 440 *sq.*, 445 *sqq.*, 483.

[3] See the weekly paper *Ḥaḍramaut*, 9th year, No. 304, Surabaya, 9th Oct. 1931.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-S (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

778 of the woods of date-palms and the villages spoken of in the popular accounts, nor did we see any ruins of houses or castles. The *sēl*-bed has dug itself deeply in and the last ten date-palms or so are in danger of being uprooted by this smaller *nuqra*. As we proceed, boulders and sand get the better of the loam, the wādī narrows and a small footpath winds between annoying fragments of rock. We walk fast, spurred on by the desire to look upon the mystery of Ḥaḍramaut. The table-land is very much intersected here; wild crags rise on all sides. No trace of volcanism is to be found. There is a thick stratum of limestone on sandstone here as everywhere else in Ḥaḍramaut. Here and there the dark mouths of caves can be seen in the mountain slopes.

We walk fast for two or three hours through Wādī Barhūt, ever narrowing as it winds upwards, and we see no living being in this savage, silent world of rock. Were one to journey through it alone one would surely be overwhelmed by a feeling of great loneliness. Furthermore, as the sun rises, it becomes unbearably hot in this narrow, deep wādī of rock; it is a region of terror, but, as a matter of fact, all uninhabited parts of Ḥaḍramaut are. It is a little more savage here than elsewhere, but that alone does not explain why popular imagination has created such terrifying tales about Bīr Barhūt, tales which are believed all over the country up to the present day.

At last we stand at the foot of the mountain-side of Bīr Barhūt. We see the wide, dark mouth of the cave, in a steep mountain wall, about 300 feet above us. The sight has the effect of a challenge. Our escort hasten to throw down everything superfluous in a heap beside the camel with the bags of water, and then to clamber up to the entrance of the cave. We take a good drink and then follow them. A zigzag path, where camels can go, has been cut into the rock; parts of it have been destroyed by water and it does not give the impression of being in use. Sayyid Bin ʿAqīl tells in his paper [1]

[1] See p. 165.

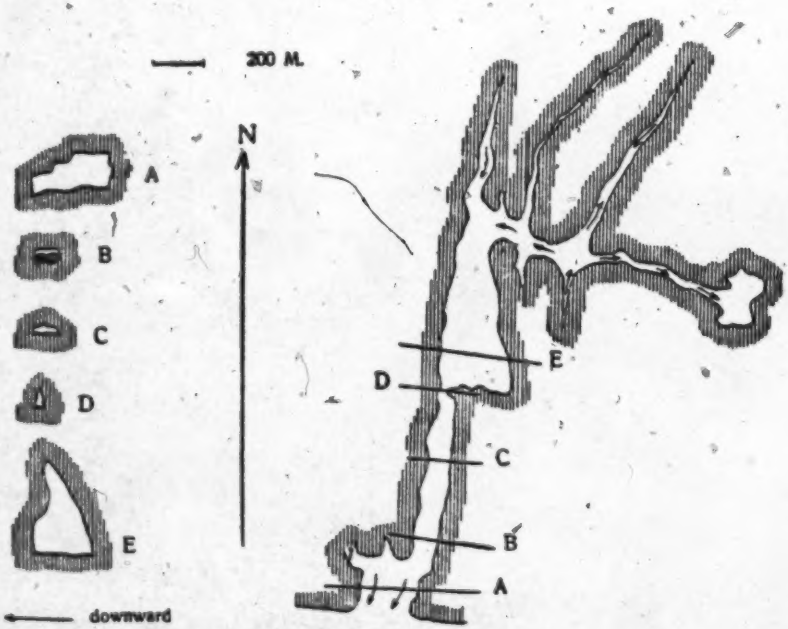
that camels used to go by this path to fetch manure from out of Bīr Barhūt. This must have been the dung of bats. 778

When we arrived at the top, we found our companions sitting on boulders scattered on the floor of a broad, high porch, the portal of Bīr Barhūt, which is about 120 feet wide, 45 feet high and 60 feet deep. Boulders many feet in height lie in disorder before the entrance to the cave in the further wall, which is nine feet wide and four feet high. Having established this fact we take a short rest. Sayyid ʿAlī sniffs adventure and his thoughts see fame beckoning to him. Naked but for a loin-cloth and with a gun of one of the Bedouins who remain behind slung over his shoulder, he leads the way, creeping into the cave. We follow with the torches and the rope. Von Wissmann has with him the compass and the route note-book. He, as an experienced investigator of caves, will sketch our route inside Bīr Barhūt, and thus we hope, if torches and compass work properly, to find our way back again to the entrance. Besides three electric torches we have a *fānūs*, a kerosene lamp, by means of which we can verify whether the air in the cave has a sufficiency of oxygen. Sayyid ʿAlī goes ahead with this lamp, Von Wissmann follows with the measuring tape in his hand, I follow as soon as the tape becomes taut and the direction has been noted down.

Cautiously we climb, one behind the other, into the thick darkness; the cave leads fairly horizontally into the limestone mountain. Passing over sharp, rough boulders we reach a spot where the cave becomes so low that we have to creep through on hands and feet. Beyond this the passage becomes roomy and high again. We have to pass deep clefts, the bottom of which even the beams of our lanterns cannot fathom. The rock on which we walk is covered with a thick layer of fine dust into which our feet sink noiselessly. Daylight does not penetrate here. The gloom makes a deep impression on the Arabs who are with us, for they are convinced that this black night hides monsters and spirits, who must resent the pre-

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

778 sence of intruders in their kingdom. It is too much for some of them; they can still find their way out and do so, and none of those who remain utters a word of scorn or reproach. We *will* not leave our leaders, Von Wissmann and Sayyid ʿAlī, alone and, with beating hearts, we press onward. It is very warm in the cave; we feel bats flapping around us and smell



CAVE CALLED BĪR BARHŪT.

an unpleasant odour, which we ascribe to those animals, and we hear their gentle rustling. We go forward walking cautiously on the carpet of dust. The passage emerges into a high, wide space. We tell our Arab companions, who stare in stupefaction upon the dimensions of this unexpected hall: "This is the Cathedral of the Unbelievers." Their murmured answers are: "Allāh is the greatest, Allāh knoweth best." On the further side the space narrows and becomes a corridor

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

again, which ends by being so narrow as to be impassable. It seems to us that the "Cathedral" has no other exit than a broad, high one in the wall on the right. This last passage leads upwards at first, over boulders; the further we penetrate into the cave, the hotter it becomes. The oppression caused by the darkness and heat, combined with the still increasing unpleasant smell, rises in my gorge; and I think that most of us hope that those corridors will come to a dead end so that we can turn back! Meanwhile we proceed with care and pass side corridors leading off to the left and right. At the beginning of the passage which we have taken we find traces of human presence; a small niche has been hacked out of the limestone wall with a tool, the scars of which can be clearly seen, and some charcoal is lying about and there is soot on the wall of the niche. Somewhat further on there is another similar spot, where some branches also lie among the charcoal and the ashes. The Bedouins presume that it has been a place of refuge for those fleeing from the pursuit of enemies.

This corridor is long and at last narrows and comes to a dead end. In these narrow passages with no outlet it is noticeably hotter than in the broad, main corridor. If our attention had not been so much concentrated on examining the cave we should hardly have been able to endure the temperature. But now we did not think of it and only when we reached the daylight again did we see that we looked like stokers, sweating at every pore and covered all over with dust! Sometimes the side corridors descended sharply; one of them could only be entered through a small hole. Sayyid ʿAlī went first. As soon as he was through we saw him with his lamp glissading down all the while on a layer of fine rubble. Von Wissmann followed him, but we did not venture to do so. Their light vanished far away in the depths and an avalanche of stones noisily followed them; then came silence. I had the torches extinguished to economise the batteries; the pitch darkness and stillness oppressed my companions who, every moment, wished to switch on the lights again. Our thoughts

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

778 dwelt anxiously on the possibility that the two dare-devils might have had an accident, if the slope had perhaps become steeper further down. They had with them our only rope of 70 feet. We stood waiting there for twenty minutes, with increasing anxiety; then to our great relief a faint glimmer of light could be seen far away in the depths, and a little later we were helping the two weary men to climb up again along the wall of the corridor.

All sorts of sharp objects stuck out of the wall where the passages were narrow. They appeared to be shells and were frequently quite intact. We picked some off and took them away with us. The walls also sparkled as if covered with a layer of salt or other white powder, though, to judge from the taste, it was not any ordinary kind of salt.

At last all the passages within reach had been searched and we set out on the return to the main corridor. It became appreciably cooler as we neared the exit; unfortunately we had forgotten to bring a thermometer with us to measure the high temperature inside the cave. When we came out into the great porch of Bīr Barhūt we found our guides stretched out on the boulders, fast asleep. When we awakened them, they were dumb with amazement to see us again. They had waited for perhaps half an hour, hoping for our return, but then, as we still did not come, they felt sure that we had been overwhelmed by snakes and hellish spirits or suffocated by sulphurous vapours!

However, there we were standing before them, after two hours, certainly very dirty and drenched in perspiration, but very much alive. We had established the fact that Bīr Barhūt is a typical limestone cave, with nothing whatever volcanic about it. The curious but innocuous smell inside does not come from sulphurous vapour; it is probably due to the dust from the weathering of rock or, perhaps, to bats. The high temperature, especially at the ends of the corridors, is not a consequence of volcanism, but is connected with the very high temperature reached by the outer air in Wādī Barhūt.

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

the hot air penetrates to the furthest and highest parts of the 778
ve and does not cool down much there. In the whole region
Ḥaḍramaut, after the broken mountainous strata of the
coast, we saw no further trace of volcanism.

When our eyes had grown accustomed once more to the 000
light and we had had a drink, we descended again into the
wādī. The sun shone right into it and it was suffocatingly hot,
nor could we escape from the heat until we reached Qabr
Hūd, so we walked as fast as we could and in two hours
arrived at the well at the beginning of the wādī. Our escort
were unable to keep up with us, but two young Minhālī
Bedouins, with the slender suppleness and strength of the ibex,
offered their society and were entertaining companions. We
were thoroughly exhausted by the time we got to the well,
but they were absolutely fresh. They drew water for us and,
afterwards, drank themselves but once. We drank the water
— warm, but clear — again and again, and had it poured
over our backs and chests, so getting a long needed bath.
One of the two spoke Swahili; he had spent five years in
Nairobi where he had had a shop and had saved 600 *riyāls*.
Now he was the happy possessor of ten camels and a young 583
wife. The other was still unable to marry, as the marriage 291
portion here is from 150 to 200 *riyāls* and, for the moment, 301
he had not this amount. He would like us to take him abroad, 302
there to try his luck as his comrade had done. The Minhālīs
wear necklaces of plaited leathern straps and red and white
coral, and round their waists, under the cartridge-belt, I saw
similar, very artistic bands. They are bare-headed, with
a strap round their greasy hair, which is waved and worn
half-length, and they wear small loin-cloths over which the
cartridge-belt is buckled. Many of them have still muzzle-
loading guns. It is obvious from their primitive appearance
that the lands where they rove lie along the southern border
of the Rubᶜ el-Khālī, the extreme northern limit of Ḥaḍramaut.

In the house in the ravine of Qabr Hūd it was also un- 000
bearably hot, the indoor temperature reaching from 40° to

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

has made his fortune abroad has built here a princely house for himself. He has, of course, not forgotten to render thanks to Allah at the same time by building a mosque, a glittering white masterpiece of Ḥaḍramī architecture. The contrast between the great wealth of many sayyids and the poverty of the great mass of the people does not seem to be poignantly felt here. The palaces of the rich stand right in the midst of dying towns; their children, frequently overdressed, play with the almost naked black children of slaves. The rich return of their own accord from lands of culture and prosperity to their own land of appalling poverty, to enjoy within its borders the wealth they have accumulated. Allah has willed that there be rich men in the world and poor men to whom they should be able to give alms. It is fit and proper that there should be beggars in every good Muslim society and especially a plentiful supply of them in places of pilgrimage, so that the pious may have ample opportunity to practise the generosity commanded by Allah. We have noticed little jealousy or class conflict in Ḥaḍramaut. This is certainly due partly to the democratic way of living. The privileges of the sayyid class have a religious and not a money basis. Soldiers, household slaves and the free citizens of the village meet in the *madjlis* of the rich and all eat there in company, drink from the same bowl and join in the same converse.

From Qasam we go by car along the high clay bank of the *masīla* (the bed of the wādī), which has been eroded by the *nuqra*. Having reached a point opposite ʿEnāt we attempt to cross the wide sandy bed of the *masīla* to reach the town. The palm plantations have been growing progressively thinner and the soil here is entirely covered by a layer of sand. We stall constantly in this sand in the *masīla* and have difficulty in reaching ʿEnāt, where everything speaks of vanished glory. The town is scattered over a wide area; great open spaces give one the impression that the population was formerly much larger than it is now. At one time many pilgrims were attracted here by the seven *qubbas* which adorn

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

the tombs of holy men. The Āl el-ᶜĒderūs, one of the families of sayyids whose riches are made in Java, come from ᶜĒnāt and are, moreover, the ruling family in this pious city, which owes the few houses that are kept in repair, the beautiful white mosques and the fine school for boys to these sayyids and to those of the Āl Ḥāmid. At the seven *qubbas* we meet Sayyid ᶜAlī bin el-ᶜĒderūs, who feels an exile from his people who live in Surabaya, but his place here will be taken by another member of the family in a few years' time. He is glad to meet someone who knows Java and inyites us to take a cup of tea with him. We learn from him that ᶜĒnāt can boast of thirteen mosques and has, at the present time, 5000 inhabitants. Water for drinking has to be brought from a great distance, as the local supply is not fit for it. Sayyid ᶜAbdallāh Āl Ḥāmid, who lived for ten years in Dār es-Salām, is also glad to have an opportunity of talking once more with Europeans and comes to Sayyid ᶜAlī's *madjlis*. He has some acquaintance with the early history of his country and tells us of the great dam which is said to have existed in pre-Islamic times between Qabr Hūd and the sea. The destruction of this dam ushered in the decline of Ḥaḍramaut. Sayyid ᶜAbdallāh has his own theory of the means by which the great stones of the buildings in the pre-Islamic period were piled one upon the other; he asserts that he has seen representations of elephants on the ruins and assumes that it was by them that these heavy stones were dragged to their places. I doubt whether this supposition is correct, although it is true that elephants play a part in the historical traditions of Arabia. The great castles are built on high, rocky hills, whose slopes are barely practicable even for man.

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Hadhramaut MM2

361 Dō'an, 'Amd, and 'Adam, and the large towns of the main wādi. Speaking of this palace, Bent says, 'Like a fairy palace of the Arabian Nights, white as a wedding cake, and with as many battlements and pinnacles, with its windows painted red, the colour being made from red sandstone, and its balustrades decorated with the inevitable chevron pattern, the castle of El-Qatan rears its battlemented towers above the neighbouring brown houses and expanse of palm-groves; and behind it rise the steep red rocks of the encircling mountains.'

There are several mosques and a busy bazaar; the houses are built largely of stone. The town is surrounded by mud walls, which wind over the hill-side, beginning and ending at the palace of the Jemadar; they are protected at the most elevated point by a strong fortress. The population of Qatan is probably well over 2,000. The water-supply is good and abundant, and is derived almost entirely from very numerous wells. A special kind of date called 'Hajar', which is much prized, seems almost peculiar to this district.

•[778] The Wādi Sirr is within easy reach of Qatan, in the recesses of which is *Qabr Sālih*, the tomb of Sālih, of no architectural pretensions, but looked upon as one of the principal sacred places of the Hadhramaut.

4. **Shibām** is built on an extensive knoll, in the midst of what is probably the largest agricultural settlement of the whole Hadhramaut system of wādis. The town is surrounded by a wall, about 20 feet in height, of sun-dried brick, with bastions and turrets at intervals; it occupies a very strong strategical position, being situated in the very middle of the wādi, so narrow here that the cliffs on either side are within gunshot of the citadel. On the side of the wādi, immediately opposite the citadel, is a fort with some cannon, and all the lower hills around are dotted with smaller fortresses. The town is entered by a high double main gate on the eastern side, and just inside is a large square, on one side of which stands the lofty palace of the Jemadar. Near by are other large houses of wealthy Seyyids or townsmen, many of them rivalling the palace in height and size, and whitened and adorned with domes and spires. It is to be remarked that many of these houses communicate by subterranean passages. Most of the streets are very narrow and steep, with occasional runnels of dirty water. In strong contrast to the quarter of the notables, some parts of the town are entirely in ruins; Hirsch says, 'in fact, all around speaks ruin; houses falling to pieces; miserable collections of huts and heaps of rubble'. Shibām, with a population of 6,000 souls (Van den Berg puts it much lower than this), is perhaps the largest of